

アンデッドは



暖を求む

UNDEAD SEEKS WARMTH

- Volume 1 -
EVOLUTION

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CHAPTER 9

—The deceased doesn't have a presence.

There is no heartbeat and breathing sounds.

Therefore, they sometimes become the greatest weapon.

I suppress my footsteps and I walk slowly and quietly.

The [Low-class Skeleton] (Lesser Skeleton)'s back is totally exposed to me.

It's appearance induces fear, but it actually is a slow-moving, fragile low-class monster.

It's an opponent that me, an [Immortal] (Undead) can win 9 out of 10 times without being hurt..... Is what I was told.

One step, two steps, three steps. The other side is not aware of me yet.

That should be it. A Skeleton is not intelligent enough to take precautions, it's a monster that only moves and attacks whatever is reflected in its hollow eye sockets.

It walks slowly while making creepy rattling sounds.

I push my fingers together and use my hand like a sword.

The target is the cervical vertebrae. Although the skeleton is only bones, it was formerly a humanoid. It will die without a head.

The neck of a Skeleton is especially fragile.

I move towards the Skeleton's neck and chop with my hand vigorously.

I heard a snapping sound.

Without its head, the Skeleton crumbled like a puppet whose strings snapped.

I decided to take a breather after defeating five Skeletons in the vicinity. Though I do not breathe.

..... No matter how this undead body doesn't get tired, there still is a mental fatigue.

I slowly lean against the wall and think.

The reason I hunt so frantically is because of the conversation I had with Vermut Nee-san a few days ago.

..... To put it frankly, my body decays after warming up.

When I was told this, I was shocked, but I also understood.

I'm a moving corpse. The flesh naturally decays with time.

The reason I didn't decay so far is, because the temperature in this Labyrinth is below the freezing point.

And one more thing. The present me can't get out of this Labyrinth.

In fact, Undead is a monster that is closer to the Skeleton, not the Zombie.

An existence that came to life after magic entered a corpse.

And the source of that magic is this place, the [Labyrinth of Everlasting Darkness].

In other words, I can only move in this place.

When Merlin escaped the other day because the heat has escaped with her, I thought I was feeling unpleasant because of that, but it seems that wasn't the case.

I will rot if I warm up.

I can't go out of this cold labyrinth.

As expected, even though I usually cool head, I was in despair. Nee-san taught me how to solve my problems.

The method to warm myself up without rotting, even outside of the labyrinth.

Vermut Nee-san smiled all the time while explaining everything thoroughly as if having fun teaching me who knows nothing.

There are three methods.

Become a [Followers] of a monster far superior to me.

Obtain a [Magic Tool] that contains a high amount of magic and use it as a fuel.

And finally, defeat monsters and go through an [Evolution].

I was told these three methods could grant me my wish.

Lecture—Vermut Nee-san taught me this—The fastest route is to become her follower.

But apparently, there seems to be a suitable risk.

Firstly, one would become her follower for his whole life, it is impossible to cancel the contract.

If the master dies, you will die too. You can't put a great distance between you and the master.

Above all, followers seem to be under a great mental strain and will collapse 9 out of

10 times.

In the first place, this is a convenient spell to control powerful monsters, there is no consideration to become a follower, this method is full of demerits.

Next, [Magic Tool] method wasn't recommended, apparently it's almost impossible to find one.

The reason being, Magic Tools are rare and very difficult to obtain, meaning I will be targeted if I walk alone with it.

It's different from the follower method and has no demerits, however thinking about what to do until then and afterwards is unpleasant.

That leaves the [Evolution], the most realistic and easy to some extent.

Evolution. The hidden possibility of creatures with magical power.

A high ranking monster like Vermut Nee-san is necessary to take a specific action in order to evolve, but it's different for a low-class monster like me.

You should kill monsters. Weak or strong, defeat them all and snatch their magical powers for your own good.

If that's the case, cling to this labyrinth in order to preserve. The surrounding magic can prevent your body from rotting.

However, if you fail..... You will die for good this time.

What are you going to do?

After the lecture, I nod to Nee-san's question in acknowledgment.

..... There is a chance, that if I keep evolving further, I may be able to obtain a living body.

Nee-san said so.

If that is the truth, there's no need to be hesitant.

Why did I die, also who am I?

I still don't know these things.

Still, I want to live.

I want to live again.

Therefore, I will fight.

In order to regain a warm body.

CHAPTER 10

I walk around the labyrinth quietly, trying to suppress the sound of my feet tapping.

One month has passed since I started wandering around the [Labyrinth of Everlasting Darkness] and I finally graduated from bare feet and ragged clothes.

I have received clothes from Vermut Nee-san. I really admire her greatly.

..... But somehow she only had butler clothes.

A blood sucking vampire noble • A noblesse vampire lord • As the name suggest, they have an image of a noble..... therefore?

Maa, at least I got proper clothes. I can walk with my head held high now.

Also, when I wear this, Nee-san looks very happy. I'm glad I could be of help even a little.

Nee-san has been looking after me since we have met.

Since I have been helped in various ways indiscriminately, I want to somehow repay her kindness.

..... Therefore, I have to kill monsters until I'm able to evolve.

Nearby, there is a green caterpillar that is the size of a dog, it's the scavenging dust worm, I quickly run up to it and crush its head under my feet.

I'm different from the past me who only wandered aimlessly through the labyrinth.

I have a goal. With that alone, I'm different.

The coldness pierces my body and as always I become completely chilled.

However, my dead heart was full of hope.

I just happen to meet a low-class skeleton soldier and hammer my hand in its neck.

Like this, I'm one step closer to the warm body.

To reach the evolution is by no means an easy feat.

In order to evolve, I have to kill at least several hundred monsters.

Of course, I can't confront strong monsters without a risk.

Vermut Nee-san told me that I should patiently defeat guys that are weaker than me.

By the way, that person's (though she is not a person) strength is abnormal. As expected of demon king class monster, the small fries can't even touch her.

Once a stupid skeleton got close to Nee-san and it was immediately scattered by her overflowing magic.

Maa, if skeletons are about level 10, then it wouldn't be strange if Nee-san's level is above 200.

I'm probably around level 20. Hannibal must be around level 90.

I can win against a foe 5 level higher than me with little difficulty. If it's above 10 levels higher it's nearly impossible to win.

Maa, it's from my own judgement so I can't really tell without prejudice.

To put it simply, if Nee-san doesn't suppress her magic power intentionally, I am not able to approach her.

It seems that while I'm not able to withstand her magic power, leaving this labyrinth would be very hard.

I don't know how much stronger or which race I will evolve to. There's also a possibility that evolving once won't be enough.

Nevertheless, I will still aim towards the evolution. No matter how long it may take.

For the sake of that • • • girl, I will—Huh?

Who is 'that girl'?

Is she someone from my high school days, or someone from this world, I can't remember.

I don't remember my family, I don't even know my name, yet I'm concerned about someone.

I want to at least remember my name. I don't want to be named Nanashi John forever.

At least to remember human relationships..... ah!

My classmate who sat before me Tanioka! He was the really pleasant guy who was often chugging down mayonnaise!

.....

It frighteningly didn't matter.

Two more chapters coming later today.

CHAPTER 11

Today I'm looking for a prey as well and I found my first game, a Departed Soul (Ghost).

These fellows whose outward appearance looks like an ugly curtain, have no mass, therefore, they can attack through the walls and floor.

However, that's it. Their strength is weak and movement is slow. Intelligence at most at the level of Skeletons.

They may be a little difficult to handle for adventurers, but unfortunately for them, I'm an undead.

I'm a corpse that can move thanks to the magic.

In other words, this body has more than enough magic stored inside.

Basically, my attacks will hit even a monster with no mass.

I dashed forward in order to settle the battle quickly.

The ghost notices me and lets out a high-pitched scream.

The ghost's defense is laughably weak.

It can be said that I who attacks straight on has the best affinity.

I pierce my hand right between the ghost's eyebrows.

Like a fish stabbed by a harpoon, the ghost flapped around violently for several seconds.

I shake my hand 2, 3 times after pulling it out.

Because my opponent was a ghost, there was no blood, but I developed such a habit after hunting for a while.

The butler clothes Vermut Nee-san gave me are certainly a vampire quality product, after getting ripped or after blood spills on them, they self-restore after a while.

But I still can't get used to the sticky feeling of blood on my hands.

Though aside from temperature I can't feel anything else so it may be just my imagination.

Well, when my hands become bloody, I just wipe them on my clothes.

Also, Nee-san sometimes licks it off.

The sense of touch should be dull, but how to say this, her tongue give me the chills.

Is it one of the skills obtained through evolution I wonder?

Today is a play day with Vermut Nee-san.

No, I don't quite understand, but it seems it was decided.

From her stories, it seems that she doesn't have any friends.

Probably because she is way too strong.

When I arrived at the place, there was a door in the wall.

Though I've never been in this neighborhood, it seems that this place is Vermut Nee-san's room.

I used the nicely detailed knocker and knocked lightly.

Immediately, a friendly voice told me to come in.

When I open the door and come in, I immediately notice Vermut Nee-san who was sitting in the middle of a luxuriously decorated room.

We haven't met in few days. Because I got a pocket watch with the butler clothes I should be right on time.

Nee-san who is somehow happily grinning let me sit in front of her.

..... Well then, I wonder what will we play today?

While thinking so, Nee-san took out a tea and a black and white board.

Is this a chess board? So this world has this too.

As expected of Vampire Lord. She owns some tasteful toys.

Nee-san has some considerable skills. I'm quite skilled at board games myself, but she won with 7 wins and 5 losses.

And now I'm in the middle of combing the winner's hair.

My fingers aren't getting stuck at all in her silky smooth blond hair.

Soak the hair with a hairspray..... the content is blood.....

Maa, she's a vampire, you can see her fangs when she smiles, the dimension is different.

Although it's nothing new, this person is a monster. Nah, although I say that, I too am a monster.

But when I think about it, I never saw Nee-san sucking blood.

It seems she can drink only human blood. Humans around 20 years are her favorite.

I'm told she sucks them dry. That's scary.

It's the first time I feel glad that I'm already dead.

In a hall without monsters, I use one of my hands like a sword.

Though as undead I can't train my muscles, I was able to at least master my movements.

I look for a movement that enables me easily to attack and repeat that movement earnestly.

The battle method Nee-san taught me is extremely simple. Behead or hit a vital spot. One of those two.

Kick to make me access vital spots easier.

If you ask why do I only use a hand like a sword. It's really simple, it's my strongest attack.

If it's only power, naturally the kick is stronger. However, when you talk about sharpness and precision, using a hand like a sword is better.

Nee-san told me if that is the case I should practice only the Handsword.

Instead of using awkward kick attacks, I should master Handsword until I'm able to one hit kill.

Fortunately, from human and low-class monster perspective, undead's physical strength is quite high.

If I hit a vital spot, I'm able to one-hit kill even a monster of the same rank.

Furthermore, being an undead enables me to move covertly. Magicians and Priests would be hard to deal with because they can detect me through magic, but against monsters in this area, my stealth is more than enough.

My heat and life detection are very high.

In short, my tactics consist only of Surprise attacks.

In this world, it's kill or be killed. Until I have obtained overwhelming strength like Nee-san, there's no way I will fight fair and square.

If you win you live, if you lose you die. That's all.

Nee-san told me this."Use any means necessary to live. I won't forgive you if you selfishly die".

In order to repay my benefactor, I will keep on living no matter what.

Until this body regains warmth.

And until I repay Vermut Nee-san's kindness.

I will live no matter what.

CHAPTER 12

Two months has passed since I came to this world.

A Low-Class Skeleton Soldier (Lesser Skeleton), Departed Soul (Ghost), Scavenger (Dust Worm), Rotting Corpse (Zombie).

The number of monsters I had killed exceeded 100.

Still not enough, though. I don't have the time to be cocky.

I can surely kill small fries without a problem, but I'm honestly concerned about superior monsters that reside in this labyrinth.

I have to be careful even of the lowest class demon, Lower Devil(Lesser Evil).

Corpse-Eating Dragon(Hannibal)'s sub-species is the Large Black Lizard(Black Salamander).

It looks like these two are the strongest beings in the [Labyrinth of Everlasting Darkness].

By the way, about Hannibal. It seems that he is an irregular that wasn't originally from the labyrinth.

According to Vermut Nee-san, he probably lost a turf war and was forced to come here.

Such a terrifying monster was defeated. I thought that this world is scary once again.

Well, aside from that.

After killing a lot of monsters, my strength rose considerably compared to me from two months ago.

The explanation is simple when a monster like me defeats another monster, a part of

its magic power will transfer to me.

By doing so, the magic power will eventually exceed the amount my body can contain.

To fix this problem the phenomenon of evolution will occur.

The present me is probably around 30% to 40% full. Even so, the results are noticeable.

Therefore, it's easy to make a blunder.

As I said before, there is still a lot of dangerous creatures that could take my life.

The probability of me dying to the Lesser Evil is higher than dying to the Black Salamander.

A little carelessness will very easily lead to my demise. That's how this world works.

I understand my situation precisely.

This is the most important thing Nee-san taught me.

Not getting impatient and arrogant.

Just do it slowly one-by-one.

That is for the best.

That should be for the best.....

[Nameless Immortal] (Nameless Undead)

64th Day.

Present Magic Power/Magic Power Containment Limit: 144/352

Gucharito, an unpleasant sound rang from my heart as Rotting Corpse(Zombie) fell to the ground.

I waved my hands several times and shook the stuck putrid flesh from my hand.

..... This is the worst. It clings even to my clothes.

That's why I hate zombies. Its grotesqueness has no limit and above all, it can't be defeated with a chop to their neck like Skeleton Soldiers.

In the first place, zombies are totally different from undead me and skeletons.

We are brought to life when the magic power enters our bodies or bones.

On the other hand, a zombie is a parasitic type of a monster.

In other words, while it looks like a corpse came back to life it actually is just a Zombie Parasite moving its body.

Therefore, severing their heads is useless, you have to crush their nests in the chest area.

To be frank, I don't want to touch them at all, but unfortunately, I can't afford such luxury.

I was somehow able to wipe off the putrid flesh of my sleeves, I look down at the corpse of the zombie.

..... Looking at it again, it's in a terrible state. From its figure, it originally was most likely a woman.

When a person dies, he will be reduced to a lump of flesh.

And the flesh rots.

I understand. I understand that.

..... How long will I have to carry this on?

This labyrinth is cold. The temperature is always below zero.

But eventually, my body will start to decay.

When will that happen?

Several months later?

Several hours later?

These days, I'm thinking only about this.

Scary. Corruption is ugly.

I understand that impatience won't do me any good.

However, the fear never disappears.

I crouched down unintentionally.

However, that's it.

Tears won't flow from this dead body.

I just kept still for a while.

I pushed my anxiety aside and stood up.

I turn on my heel and resume the hunting.

Because I don't have the time to stand still.

Quickly, quickly.

I want to regain my living body quickly.

[Nameless Immortal] (Nameless Undead)

66th Day.

Present Magic Power/Magic Power Containment Limit: 195/352

CHAPTER 13

I have found my prey.

Low-Class Skeleton Soldier(Lesser Skeleton) normally appear sporadically, but I found 7 of them gathered in one room today.

Thanks to the steady increase of the magic in my body, I have reached the equal agility level or maybe even higher than the one from the hazy memories of my previous life

And thanks to the hard leather soles on my shoes, I can run without almost any noise, I have also learned a jump-land technique.

I easily run 50 meters under 6 seconds while being silent, close the distance between me and one of the huddled Skeletons and strike its neck three times in succession.

It dropped down just like that. Because I keep attacking the same way, the magic power in my body acts unconsciously, sharpening the edge of my hand like a knife at the moment of impact.

Nee-san taught me about this mechanism. The magic mechanism that pours information into someone's head at own convenience.

This method is called the [Magic Profess]. I have learned about this just recently.

It's a unique magic that grants the target a necessary knowledge.

It's not something that everyone can do, it's a magic one is was born with, even if you kill that person, you won't be able to learn the skill.

It seems that I was able to obtain it after reviving as Immortal(Undead).

Furthermore, in the recent days the magic power increased, and the precision of Profess has risen.

With that said, I'm was told that this magic is semi-devil king class magic when fully

unlocked, but for now, I can only roughly understand information about my opponent and their race.

However, it's sufficient. With that much, I can calculate my opponent's combat capability.

Three are down, only four are remaining. There are no signs of other monsters in the vicinity.

Three Skeletons have swords, the last one has a spear.

I wanted to kill the spear carrier earlier, but its position was bad.

I am curious why the low intelligence skeletons are huddled together, but now is not the time to think about it.

The enemy has noticed me. I won't be able to get behind them easily anymore.

From now on it's not an [Assassination] anymore, but [Fight] instead.

I stoop loosely and begin to move my both arms like a pendulum slowly.

In a case where there are a lot of enemies, annihilating them all without being noticed is still too hard for the present me.

For that reason, I prefer to kill the strong guys in the group first.

I digitize the information from Profess to determine their combat capability.

I have killed the strongest and the second strongest a little while ago.

From here, the possibility of winning without getting injured is about 90%.

Wounds..... If I get wounded by rusty metal tools, the decomposition of my body will

accelerate.

And if a part of my body rots, it will spread to my whole body like a virus.

There is no guarantee that I would be healed from that state after evolving.

Rather, I'm concerned about evolving in rotting state.

If that happens, I may never get back living body anymore.

..... Nee-san will most likely abandon me too.

I absolutely don't want that. Therefore, I must win without getting hurt.

The skeleton with a sword which was the nearest swings down its sword at me.

However, its movements are big, a very docile, sluggish attack.

I slightly step away in order to avoid, and at the same time the sword hit the floor, I swing my right hand calmly.

Its head fell down without any resistance.

As if provoked, two swords attacked me at the same time.

From left horizontally and from right diagonally with a little delay.

However, it's an attack from someone who can't cooperate in the first place. I jump behind, and the swords clash with each other, creating an audible sound.

I run, slip between the two and brandish.

With the loss of their heads, the skeletons crumbled down.

With this, 6 are down.

Finally, only the skeleton with the longest reach remains--!?

I suddenly felt a strong chill.

I use the power in my whole body to jump backward.

Immediately after that—The place where I was standing was frozen.

..... Shit.

This was a mistake.

Why did the low intelligence skeletons were huddled together?

I understood immediately after I thought about it for a little.

Just like Undead(me), the Skeletons are able to move thanks to the magic in their bodies.

The special trait of magic is that it increases and decreases physical strength, but it also means [Able to manipulate magic] at the same time.

Because Low-class Skeleton Soldier(Lesser Skeleton) with intelligence is rare, their consciousness can be easily hijacked.

In other words, these Skeletons were operated.

There is another monster behind the Skeleton with the spear.

A creature with a glossy black fur, walking on two goat-like legs.

Lower Devil(Lesser Evil). It's the only monster in this place (Labyrinth of Everlasting Darkness), that can use magic.

However, this fellow's threat isn't so direct.

If it possesses magic, it naturally means it has a high intelligence.

Therefore, they act in a group and lure their prey into a trap.

I didn't detect this fellow before, it seems that he somehow erased his presence.

When I probe my surroundings again, I can feel 7 or 8 similar existences in the vicinity.

..... It appears that I have fallen into their trap.

I trusted my detection ability way too much. If I assumed that there was a magic that can block my detection, I could have avoided this situation.

This was an obvious mistake.

Nee-san told me to not let my guard down or be cocky because I haven't listened, I'm now in this mess.

The forthcoming of decomposition creeps on me and my eyes get cloudy.

Their objective is most likely Vermut Nee-san. She had annihilated approximately two Lesser Evil groups before, it seems some of them have escaped.

They plan to catch me and lure Nee-san out. Or maybe they want to kill me in revenge.

Either way, this is an emergency.

I pull out the topography of the neighborhood I hammered into my head and overlapped it with the placement of the enemy.

There are three routes to escape.

All of them are blocked.

With my current physical strength, it's impossible to handle around 10 Lesser Evils that can use magic.

..... But, if it's one or two.

Unlike the second most powerful monster in the labyrinth Black Salamander which I could defeat, dealing with a group of Lesser Evils is much harder.

Among routes, there is one I may possibly break through and escape.

I fixed my eyes at the Lesser Evil controlling the Skeleton carrying the spear that has blocked my way.

If I break through, it will be virtually empty behind.

Before the others come and completely encircle me, I have to break through.

I stoop low and start running with all my might.

Naturally the Skeleton with the spear blocks my way, but I go straight without minding, using a flying kick.

I crashed into the lightweight Skeleton's rib cage with all my Undead strength and it crashed into the Lesser Evil standing behind it.

Because the Lesser Evil was proud of its intelligence, it got upset after being outsmarted.

I use that opportunity and get close to the Lesser Evil with a jump.

The Lesser Evil shakes the Skeleton who obstructed its view and our eyes meet.

I, who already closed the distance, moved in to attack.

I took advantage of my power jump and pierced its heart with my hand.

The Lesser Evil died instantly.

I pulled out my bloody hand quickly and step over the corpse while running away---

--My legs, stopped.

On the route which should be virtually empty, another three appeared.

The Lesser Evils that have hidden their presences up until now appeared before me.

..... I was lured in, huh.

The footsteps of a lot of hooves resounded from behind.

My path of retreat was cut off completely.

IMMORTAL'S WORRIES AND VAMPIRE PRINCESS'S EMBRACE

In the Eastern parts of Shardia lies a dark zonge called [Mountain Range of Dusk]. A C ranked dungeon called [Labyrinth of Everlasting Darkness] is located at the base of the mountain.

Every adventurer in this region will set a foot in this dungeon as this dungeon serves as a test to divide the "fledglings" from the "adults".

Although low-class monsters belonging to the darkness element predominates in the dungeon, for humans who can't see well in the darkness, the monsters might seem twice as tough.

Those who prevail against the chilling darkness will be recognized as Novice Adventurers(Rookies).

"..... Shit..... Let go!"

Deeper parts of the labyrinth.

One youth dressed in deep crimson butler clothes.

He possesses a body in which the blood circulating through its veins doesn't warm up the body, it's a body of an Immortal(Undead). Abusive language is unbecoming for his neat and handsome appearances.

He is currently completely surrounded by over 10 Lower Devil(Lesser Evil).

With their ability to hunt in a group, physical strength, magic and intelligence, they are particularly nasty monsters to deal with in this labyrinth.

These goat-like creatures are laughing in joy.

No doubt that this is an expression they have after a successful hunt.

Their combat capabilities are obvious. If he fought, he would die. Furthermore, he

wouldn't be able to escape after getting captured.

There were no cards the youth could play anymore.

However, he still doesn't give up. He opens his cold eyes wide and watches the surroundings.

The Devils too, although there is no leeway, they can't afford to be careless.

They need to overwhelm him with numbers, as the individual combat capability of Undead is superior.

In fact, one of them was done in a little while ago.

Even if they capture him, there's no doubt that they will still be in danger.

Then, after the continuing the standoff for a while..... The Devils started moving.

Something is coming behind the group in front of the youth.

It's a lesser evil larger than others.

The youth was convinced that this was their chief.

"..... I've caught you"

The chief says out loud suddenly.

The youth was amazed for a moment, but his expression returned immediately.

"So you could speak. Before you separate the neck from my body, listen to me!"

"Stop babbling you dead fish. Do you not understand your situation, don't be stupid"

Its appearances don't match its intellectual.

No matter if it's low-class it's still a Demon, the youth thought.

"..... Tsk. To set up a trap for me, just what are you planning to do?"

"You should already know. It's a revenge for killing my subordinates"

The youth expected this.

Just recently, Vermut a woman who has evolved from Vampire into a Vampire Lord, a being that can be designated as a Demon King has slaughtered a few Lesser Evil groups.

It must be revenge for that time.

"I will capture you in order to lure that woman and then express her my gratitude.....
Let's see, for starters, I will let that woman give birth in order to reduce the numbers of my lost subordinates. After all, not just that woman, but also thanks to that Hanibal who came here from the mountain range and ate my subordinates, our numbers decreased significantly. Really convenient"

"..... Sleazebaaag.....!!"

Hearing the vulgar words, the youth's teeth creaked.

He felt anger to the point his cold blood seemed to boil.

"Before getting its servant killed, that monster will obediently surrender. 。 The famous Vampire Princess will keep receiving the seedlings of my demons until she repays for my lost subordinates"

"..... Just see what happens if you lay one of those dirty-looking fingers on Nee-san.....
I will strangle you all to death.....!!"

"Kuku..... So worried about his master. But, what can you do in that state?"

His body is restrained by three Lesser Evils, he is unable to move at all.

No matter how much stronger he is individualy, he is no match for such numbers.
Just as the chief said, he can't do anything.

However, nevertheless.

The youth clawed the stone floor with his fingers and put his whole strength in shaking off those who restricted him.

The possibility of fighting and winning is almost certainly zero.

Even if he wins, he will definitely sustain a large injury.

If that happens, that wound will start decaying.

That is what he himself is most afraid of.

However. It can't be helped.

He would rather get hurt than bring disgrace to the golden haired Vampire Princess who saved him.

Or even better.

"..... I won't go down easily. I will take you all along--"

Zokuri

The moment his fingers which clawed the stone floor entered a small crevice.

The room became filled with unmeasurable anger and everyone froze in place.

"..... What are you doing?"

A voice resounded from behind.

When did she appear in the room, no one knew.

A blonde woman dressed in luxurious clothes and a mantle with red lining.

Vermut Elsaroad was standing there.

"Nu..... u.....!?"

Her anger froze everyone, but the youth in place.

Facing such overwhelming opponent, even the chief forgot to breathe for a while.

"Release your hands from what is mine. Or do you wish to die?"

Her tone was unusually indifferent.

However, those few words seemed to be able to cut the air.

However, the chief relaxed his stiff body, shook off his fear and said while laughing.

"Fu..... fuhaha! To come to me by yourself how con, convenient! If you don't want your important servant to die, then behave yourself!!"

"....."

Her bright red eyes made turn between the chief and the youth.

With a small sigh, Vermut said.

"..... What do you want from me?"

"You know what I want! I want to turn you into our meat toilet! The power of demons who inherit your vampire traits, I can't even imagine! If I had that power, not talking about the labyrinth, the [Red Rouge Plains] even the [Mountain Rage of Dusk], everything will fall in my hands!"

The chief shouts with all his might.

The youth desperately struggles, but he isn't able to escape.

She stood there without saying anything for a while.

Suddenly, she moved closer to the devils by one step.

She removed the mantle and dropped it on the floor.

"Do as you like"

"Wha..... Nee-san!?"

Vermut said bluntly while fixing her hair.

Chief laughed at the youth who stared with his open wide eyes.

"Hahaha haha! The servant is important after all! It seems that loneliness can win even over the kings, Vampire! Well then, I will generously enjoy the body that doesn't fall behind the Night Devil(Succubus)'s!"

Chief approaches Vermut with a vulgar smile and a drool on his mouth.

And he stretched his arm in order to touch her.

"Kukuku....."

"..... Before you start, I will tell you something"

His fingertip touched her cheek.

"I can suck the blood... even with my body"

Then.

Chief's whole body dried out in several seconds.

When the chief's body fell down, it didn't make even the slightest noise.

The remaining subordinates started running in fear.

The youth did not miss this chance.

"Gaa!!"

The moment his restrictions were loosened, he sprang into the air with the power of his right arm.

Then, he cut the necks of two of the three who held him down with his handsword.

The two devils who lost their heads sank to the ground.

"And one more thing"

She brandished her hands into sharp claws.

"I'm eternal... This body is the same as a corpse's. You take the right side"

The youth follows the vampire who is dancing between the enemies.

The Lesser Evil's group was totally annihilated this time.

"Are you hurt? I'm sorry, I was late"

"..... I, I'm okay. But Nee-san, why are you....."

Vermut points at the corner of the ceiling while putting on her mantle.

If you looked carefully, you could see a red bat hanging there.

"That's my fragment. They are all over the labyrinth. Through that, I knew the whole story"

After saying that, Vermut's eyebrows lowered.

"This happened because of me. You were in danger because of the people that wanted to bring me down"

"N, no! It was my fault for falling into their trap, Nee-san didn't do anything wrong"

"It's okay. I'm at fault"

Having a Vampire who is full of pride to lower her head to you is quite rare. Because he understood that, he was panicking.

"Nee-san!? Please raise your head, I beg you!"

"..... I see"

Vermut raises her head obediently.

However, her facial expression stayed the same. The expression of being the one responsible.

The youth who didn't know what to do with her just kept staring.

"..... It's my fault. Because of me, Nee-san had to go through a bitter experience. It's my responsibility"

"But--"

"I was scared"

He interrupted Vermut and started talking bit by bit.

"..... Recently, I have been thinking a lot. How long can I stay like this"

".....?"

"Before the evolution happens, this body may rot. If it rots, it may be difficult to evolve into something with living body. I may even lose my intelligence"

But that's not all.

Once it rots, it would become ugly.

"Not only that. If I start rotting, Nee-san will abandon me. Because I was thinking like that, I was scared and ended up in that situation. I let fellows like that touch Nee-san"

He really felt sorry.....

The situation reversed before anyone noticed, the youth was the one who lowered his head.

"....."

Vermut showed a surprised expression to those words.

And.

".....N"

She embraced the youth and kissed him on the cheek.

She patted his head and whispered in his ear.

"It's okay. Something like that is impossible"

"..... Ane.....san?"

"Besides, I understand. You are close. Your body will hold. There's no need to be in a hurry"

The youth who was stiffened until now returned the embrace tightly.

They were affectionate words. It was a gentle gesture.

The uneasiness that swirled inside the youth melted like an ice.

"I'm here. I don't have any reason to abandon you. Therefore, do not worry about anything"

And.

The Undead was relieved from the bottom of his heart for the first time.

The youth said tiredly while returning the embrace.

"Nee-san..... Thank you"

"It's fine. Besides—"

You are the one who I was looking for, the one I needed.

Because I was the one who was lonely.

Vermut faint mutters past through.

This didn't reach his ears.

CHAPTER 15

In order to get behind the Large Black Lizard(Black Salamander), I quickly run to the passage.

The internal structure of this labyrinth is quite complex. After all, I couldn't find the exit even after 20 days of searching.

Thus, if one understands the terrain, getting behind monsters is quite simple.

I kick the corner of the wall which allows me to turn without slowing.

After I cross another corner, I should be able to see the Black Salamander's tail.

Its sense of hearing isn't so sharp. I should be able to land an opening attack on his defenseless back.

I will swing my handsword on its neck and if I can't pierce its scales, I will withdraw immediately.

Conversely, if I'm able to damage it, I will attack the same place while avoiding its attacks.

Let's go with this.

I came across a Black Salamander once before but avoided contact.

I do not understand its attacking methods nor its attack pattern.

All I know that it breathes cold air from the front and swings its tail in the back.

Its long neck must be a hindrance, it probably can't attack with its front claws.

How about getting on its back? Judging by the structure of the body, the back may be vulnerable.

Nah, it's dangerous to be moving just on speculation. Should I wait and see at first and

collect information?

I arrived at the last corner while collecting my thoughts.

Identical to the last corner, the passage is about 30 meters of straight line. I was able to see the figure of the Black Salamander.

..... Which reminds me, there was a time when this fellow made me feel cold.

My small grudge revives and I raise my speed.

20 meters. That fellow didn't notice me yet.

15 meters. I prepare my handsword.

10 meters. I stoop my body and accumulate the necessary force to the legs in order to jump.

The moment the distance shortened to 5 meters— I leaped forward.

This might be my highest speed so far.

The trajectory of the leap is in perfect sync with the Black Salamander who still moves leisurely without caution.

I wind up the handsword.

No doubt. This will settle it.

After confirming the results I will decide if I should withdraw or not.

I aim at the lizard's neck who didn't take a notice of me yet and swing the handsword

with all my might.

..... Eh?

Immediately after that.

I couldn't believe my eyes.

When I extracted my handsword from the defensive scales, without wasting time to rejoice.

Although there was a firm resistance, my handsword did not stop until I was forced to stop.

The black-scaled head of large lizard fell on the ground.

The sub-dragon with over three meters long body lose its head and fell on the ground with a thud.

In other words..... In other words, what?

This is bad, it surprised me so much that my circuits fried.

For now, let's poke the Black Salamander.

Hey, move. Don't die at your own convenience.

I planned to have a serious battle with you, wake up.

Naturally, even though I say this, the body doesn't get up.

Yes, certainly there are things like me, but.

However this labyrinth doesn't have enough magic power to create an Undead Dragon, there are at least dozens of Dragon Zombies, but to create them Zombie Parasites are necessary.

..... Anyway, I decided to calm down and think for a bit.

I recall my recent actions.

I was collecting magic power at a crazy pace.

And yesterday, I have defeated approximately three high intelligence, magic using Lower Devil(Lesser Evil) by myself.

Yoshi, I understand. Apparently, before I noticed, I have acquired enough power to deal with the hard scales of the top predator in this labyrinth.

When I calculate the sharpness and the speed of the handsword that landed on the lizard's neck with Magic Profess, I start feeling that it's only natural that the lizard died.

..... It was settled unexpectedly plainly, I wanted to win while dodging grandly, but win is still a win.

I can feel magic flowing into me from the Black Salamander's body.

This is the first time. As expected of sub-dragon, the quality of magic it contains is on a different level.

The magic power fills my body.

When I close my eyes in order to feel the magic, suddenly, creaking.

I have a feeling that my body is creaking.

While trying to figure out what is happening, my legs shake and I fall on the knees.

Magic Power is overflowing inside me. My body can't follow.

Soon the Profess informs me what is happening.

..... Evolution.

I calculated that I would evolve in about one week, maximum half a month, but by having hunted an unexpected prey of Black Salamander, it seems that it came earlier than I expected.

Rather, it hurts! To think that this body feels pain, who would have thought that exceeding your Magic Power limit is so painful!?

You didn't, tell me..... Nee-san.....

I mutter in somewhat shaky voice.

Suddenly, I collapse because I can't withstand the pain around my stomach anymore.

I slowly lose my consciousness.

[Nameless Undead]

73rd Day.

Present Magic Power/Magic Power Containment Limit: 363/352

- ※ Magic Power Containment Limit exceeded. Starting the Evolution from Rank1 to Rank2.
- ※ Due to the Evolution, part of the lost memories was successfully restored.

CHAPTER 16

I had a dream.

Because Undead naturally don't dream, it was a long time since I dreamt.

In the dream, I was laying on the grass and reading a book.

The place..... Probably a park or somewhere similar.

I only remember it vaguely.

I was not alone, there was a girl with me.

Probably the same age, maybe a little younger.

She had black glossy hair that reached up to her waist, she was very beautiful.

I know that girl.

However, why I know this girl that I do not know.

That girl called my name.

..... Ah.

I remember it.

My name is--

When I woke up, the first place I saw was a chandelier that hang from the ceiling.

Apparently, after I lost consciousness Nee-san carried me to her room.

Feeling a presence nearby, I turn my head and see Vermut Nee-san looking at me unusually nervously.

I sit up while smiling wryly.

Then, I felt something uncomfortable in my body.

My whole body was overflowing with power. I look at my arms. They look little different.

No, it's not something like I grew a sixth finger.

The fingers became slightly more slender and on those fingers, about two centimeters long sharp nails were growing.

I want to see myself in a mirror so I request Nee-san to bring one.

I get up from the bed and stand in front of the luxurious mirror Nee-san brought.

When I see my reflection in the mirror, I open my eyes wide.

Firstly, the hair turned white, almost transparent.

My pupils look like those of a snake, the color itself changed to a warm-less light blue.

I open my mouth, all my teeth turned black, and the front teeth became shark-like razor-sharp.

My previously pale skin disappeared and was exchanged with a white as paper skin.

The facial features stayed the same, but they were one step closer to their 'final form'.

While I was being surprised by the evolution, my sleeve was gently pulled.

When I look back, Nee-san asks me if my body is all right.

Apparently, you shouldn't be able to faint during the evolution.

It's probably because of the reconstruction of my lost memories—Memories!

That's right, memory.

During the Evolution, part of my lost memories returned.

Among the recovered memories was my name.

I inform Nee-san that I remembered my name.

Her eyes sparkled and she drew closer in order to learn my name.

Because she wasn't able to call me by my name, she was quite irritated.

I nodded as I agree that not knowing one's name is irritating and told her my name.

—Takahina.

Himuro Takahina.

That is my name.

..... I won't forget it anymore. Absolutely.

And I remembered one more thing.

That little of my memories returned during the evolution.

I don't know the reason why it did, but my reasons to aim for evolution increased.

While getting a living body, I will also get my memory.

Isn't that simple.

Although after becoming Undead, I really didn't know what to do.

Now I can move forward again.

The current goal is—

—Evolve and do something about this coldness!

Why is it so damn cold! It's so cold I could die! Even though I'm already dead!

Why is it so cold, what is the reason!?

What on earth did I evolve into!

[Freezing Undead] Himuro Takahina

74th Day.

Present Magic Power/Magic Power Containment Limit: 363/1621

※The [Evolution] from Rank1 [Undead] to Rank2 [Freezing Undead] has been completed.

CHAPTER 17

Freezing Undead.

The huge amount of magic power retains the cold, a medium ranked Undead with a non-decaying body.

Depending on the circumstances, the damage and defects can be repaired with ice and at night when the magic in the labyrinth is the most active, it's possible to regenerate.

The physical strength is several times higher than Undead's. The sharpness of the nails can be compared to the sharpness of a steel sword.

..... I have reincarnated into such being.

To think that me who above all seeks the warmth would get the complete opposite.

It's can't be considered irony anymore, it's a plain harassment.

But..... I have certainly become strong beyond comparison, I'm no longer scared of decaying.

Also, though limited only to nighttime, I'm able to leave this labyrinth.

And, the vicinity around the labyrinth is a dark zone.

It's not an exaggeration to say that I can go outside without a problem.

The most aggravating thing is the increased coldness. But, because of what I have become, there's no helping it.

I can't delevel back and it's not like I can evolve only once.

Then, this time, let's settle on having the method of not decaying and the ability to heal my wounds.

It was unbearable moving with frozen limbs at first, but I somewhat got used to it after one day.

Staying positive and moving forward. Staying positive.

I'm now following behind Nee-san who is heading out of the labyrinth.

Since I've become an Undead. I can finally see the outside of this world.

..... It's a strange feeling. Feelings of joy mixed with anxiety, such feeling.

When we come to the long staircase that leads out of the labyrinth, Nee-san looked back at me.

Her usually expressionless face had a little smile on and she presented her hand before me.

After a slight pause, I take her hand.

Nee-san's Vampire hand temperature isn't high at all.

Nevertheless..... It felt warm to my cold body.

The Wind blows at me.

I didn't pay attention to it before, but it was really a long time since I felt the wind.

I finish going up the staircase and step outside.

--Wide.

It's totally different from the labyrinth's walls and ceiling.

The scenery continued as far as I could see.

Grassy plains around the labyrinth, and towering mountains in the back.

This is the outside.

This is the world.

I didn't think that I was locked up in such small place.

When I come out like this, it really feels like I was captured inside a cage.

There are no walls nor ceiling.

When I look at the sky, I see clouds, stars and a large red moon.

I haven't seen such moon before, it is shining red.

It was painting the darkness red.

It surely looks weird to humans.

Red sky, ground, everything must look sinister to them.

However.

For me who isn't human anymore, it looked beautiful.

When I'm admiring the scenery, Nee-san beside me suddenly laughs.

She really wanted to show me this scenery once I evolve.

She laughed again when she said so.

Her bashful face was lit red just like the moon.

It was more beautiful than anything I have ever seen.

ARROW SHOOTING GIRL

Kirikirikiri..... Pashu.

Identical noises were endlessly resounding in a vacant piece of land.

One young girl was standing in this unpopular place.

She kept pulling the bow in her hands.

"91..... 92....."

Kirikirikiri..... Pashu.

Most of the arrows shot pierced the target dozens of meters away.

Many stuck arrows in the same place made the target look like a hedgehog.

"99..... This is it.....!"

Pashu.

She picked the last arrow at her feet and fired it.

After confirming that the arrow struck the center of the target, the girl—Merlin sat

down while holding the bow.

"Haa..... Haa....."

Sweat appears on her forehead and her breathing is rough too.

Because of the continuous pulling of the string, blood was flowing out from her hand.

She is obviously overworking.

Because of her hard-working nature, she already imposed such an unreasonable training on herself many times..... This time, it's particularly bad.

But now, Merlin doesn't have any companions who can stop such an absurdity.

No. She may be doing this because of that very reason.

"..... tsu"

After her breathing calmed down, her heart started to hurt.

The sadness attacked her, causing her to scream out in a loud voice.

She became alone.

The unchangeable fact pierced her heart.

"Sieg..... Alice....."

The names of her childhood friends and irreplaceable companions spilled out from her mouth.

They have died.

Only she herself survived.

The feelings of longing overflowed inside her. And regrets.

If only she were stronger.

So strong that she wouldn't lose against anyone.

The pain similar to thorns piercing her heart sprang while she thought about her friends.

"..... tsu"

Merlin stood up slowly.

More than two months already passed since that day.

She must become stronger.

Much stronger than she is now.

Once again, she loaded the arrow in her bow and aimed at the target.

She didn't think that this was the right way at the beginning.

However, right now, it's the only thing she can do.

If she doesn't get stronger, she can't enter the [Labyrinth of Everlasting Darkness]

again.

In order to find mementos of her friends and to find that Undead.

For this reason, her way can't be wrong.

The only thing she can do right now is to shoot her arrows.

She's having such messy thoughts.

Merlin continued shooting the arrows.

I have been regretting fleeing from the labyrinth for a long time.

..... However.

I am not thinking "if only I died in place of those two".

The Undead who helped me said.

[People should live to their utmost limit until they can't carry on]

I'm alive.

Even if I die, those two won't come back.

Therefore, I will live on their part.

If I didn't think such, I wouldn't be firing my arrows like I'm now.

I wouldn't even be able to stand up.

Those words full of life that I have received from the Undead.

Before I noticed, became my everything.



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